

February 23, 2022

Testimony Regarding HB 5037 - Dental Reimbursement Rates

Corey Buchas, Terryville

Senators Kushner, Cicarella, Osten, Hartley, and Miner, Representatives Abercrombie, Betts, Walker, Dathan, Nolan, and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Corey Buchas and I am a registered voter in Terryville, CT.

I am testifying in my role as a future dental hygienist, as I am in a dental hygiene school program at Tunxis Community College.

The proposed increased reimbursement rates for adults seeking dental treatment on HUSKY are greatly appreciated, especially the proposed endodontic rate matching the children's rate. However, we are concerned the 25% increase is too small to increase provider participation. **In order to increase provider participation in Medicaid, adult dental reimbursement rates need to be increased to parity with the child rates.**

- The average wait time for a root canal is 4 months. That is too long to live in pain and is usually too long for a root canal to be successful.
- According to public health dentists, 8 out of 10 adults on HUSKY who need a root canal end up getting an extraction because they cannot find a specialist to treat them.
- The dental Medicaid rates have not been increased in 14 years.
- The adult dental Medicaid rates are so low, dentists receive 37 cents on the dollar compared to average insurance.
- 2 out of 3 adults on HUSKY do not access dental care, many because they cannot find a dentist.
- Increased Medicaid rates for all services can lead to an expanded network and reduce geographic barriers to care for the adults of Connecticut .
- Access to comprehensive adult services has potential to reduce financial burden for patients and emergency rooms having to see patients experiencing dental-related pain.

I urge you to increase the adult Medicaid reimbursement rates to bring them to parity with the child Medicaid rates. This will allow family dental practices to accept Medicaid patients of all ages, expanding the network and improving access to care.

We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we can best provide comprehensive dental care to Connecticut's low-income residents. Thank you for your time and for supporting access to care in Connecticut.

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